

Coin-operated gaming machine

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Abstract

Coin-operated gaming machines are equipped with a plurality of rollers or discs which carry the features in the form of digits or symbols. The digits or symbols located in the viewing fields when the rollers or discs are stationary can provide a win in the combination when this combination identifies a win in the win plan affixed visibly on the front glass. Specific win combinations conventionally give rise to special games for the purpose of increasing the chances of a win. In the event of a win in special games, the amount is increased. In the coin-operated gaming machine according to the invention, a recording device for measuring the duration of a game series is provided. After a predetermined game duration, further special games are provided in addition to special games already achieved. These special games are to be seen as independent of the feature combination

achieved during the game series and as a loyalty bonus or a reward.



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Claims

1. Coin-operated gambling machine featuring several powered reels or discs arranged in a housing and capable of rotating independently of each other and featuring markings in the form of digits and/or symbols, whereby the power required to play a game can be triggered by a certain number of coins, that the front panel of the housing consists of an at least partially transparent panel featuring several marked-out fields, and that the combination of symbols resulting in the marked-out fields when the reels or discs are at rest, in certain constellations to each other represent winning combinations of a type that result in the running of a predetermined number of bonus games credited to a bonus game counter, characterised in that a registration means (16) is provided by means of which the duration of an uninterrupted series of games can be recorded which, once a predetermined value has been reached, is capable of acting on the bonus game counter (14) in such a way that a series of bonus games is triggered independently of the combination of symbols achieved during the series of games.

2. Coin-operated gambling machine according to claim 1, characterised in that the duration of the series of bonus games triggered by the registration means (16) is also recorded by the registration means (16) and credited to a new series of games.

3. Coin-operated gambling machine according to claim 1, characterised in that the registration means is designed as a time switch (16) powered by electrical energy and featuring an analogue or digital display unit.

4. Coin-operated gambling machine according to claim 1, characterised in that the registration means features a visual display unit.

5. Coin-operated gambling machine according to claim 4, characterised in that the visual display unit is designed in the form of a strip of lights featuring a time scale.

6. Coin-operated gambling machine according to one or several of the above claims, characterised by the fact that the duration of a series of games is determined by means of counting the individual games with a fixed duration of play.

7. Coin-operated gambling machine according to one or several of the above claims, characterised in that the registration means (16) is integrated in panel (1) forming the front the device housing (2).

8. Coin-operated gambling machine according to one or several of the above claims, characterised in that the registration means (16) displays either the duration of a series of games or the period of time remaining until the bonus games are triggered.

Coin-operated gambling machine

The present invention relates to a coin-operated gambling machine featuring several powered reels or discs arranged in a housing and capable of rotating independently of each other and featuring markings in the form of digits and/or symbols, whereby the power required to play a game can be activated by a certain number of coins, that the front panel of the housing consists of an at least partially transparent panel featuring several marked-out fields, and that the combination of symbols resulting in the marked-out fields when the reels or discs are at rest, in certain constellations to each other represent winning combinations of a type that results in the running of a predetermined number of bonus games credited to a bonus game counter.

Coin-operated gambling machines of the type mentioned above are well known. There are essentially two types of design. The first type of design usually employs several playing reels whose outer circumference is marked with symbols. The playing reels each rotate around either a horizontal or a vertical axis. In another embodiment, playing discs are provided which each rotates around a horizontal axis and whose faces are oriented towards the front of the device are marked with symbols. The markings usually consist of digits, numbers or symbols. The markings may all be of the same type or of different types.

Each game is played by inserting coins in the manner necessitated by the design of the device, whereby the amount for one game is currently set at DM 0.30. As soon as this amount is available, the playing reels or discs are set in rotation and then stopped, preferably one after the other. The minimum playing time must be 15 seconds, as prescribed by law. The player is usually given the opportunity to intervene in the running of the game by applying chance factors.

Once the game is completed, the symbols in the marked-out fields form a combination that may result in a win. This is shown in the payout table provided on the front panel of the device. Certain combinations of symbols result in several so-called bonus games. This refers to games with improved odds for a win by virtue of having increased prospects for a payout in the event of a win. Also known are devices where points scored by combinations of symbols are written to a points counter, with bonus games being awarded when a certain number of points has been reached.

However, in all known devices, the awarding of bonus games depends on the combination of symbols resulting from a game. As every player naturally wants to enjoy bonus games, it can happen that only normal games are awarded even after a relatively prolonged period of playing. The present invention aims to meet the objective of further developing a device of the above-mentioned type in such a way that increased odds for a win may be expected even if none of the combination of symbols designated for this purpose have been achieved during a series of games.

The invention solves the problem by providing a registration means which allows the duration of an uninterrupted series of games to be recorded and which is able to act on the bonus game counter once a predetermined value has been reached, so that a series of bonus games can be triggered regardless of the combinations of symbols achieved during the series of games.

It is thus possible for each player to enjoy bonus games because the registration means triggers the bonus games after a predetermined period of uninterrupted play. For this purpose, the registration means may be set to a specific duration of play. As a matter of course, the device according to the invention can also award bonus games during the series of games; however, in contrast to the known devices bonus games are always awarded once the players have reached a predetermined duration of play.

In order to increase the odds for a win further still, a further development of the device is planned, in which the duration of the series of bonus games triggered by the registration means is also recorded by the registration means and added to the new series of games. This leads to the possibility that the intervals between the bonus games triggered as a result of the duration of play become shorter. It is particularly advantageous if the registration means is provided in the form of a time switch featuring an analogue or digital display and powered by electrical energy, as this will make it possible to start recording from the time when a player uses the device for the first time. As soon as the predetermined duration of play has been reached and the bonus games have been awarded, the recording of the duration of play can be restarted by means of appropriate switching means.

In a variation of this, the registration means may feature a visual display unit, preferably in the form of strips of light. In this type of embodiment, the measurement of time may be taken off the drive for the playing reels or discs, as the duration of a game can be predetermined and cannot be changed.

The display of the registration means may be designed in such a way that it displays either the duration of a series of games or the period of time until the bonus games are triggered.

Further advantageous embodiments of the present invention are provided in the following descriptions of preferred examples of embodiments.

Shown are in:

Fig. 1 a coin-operated gambling machine according to the invention and featuring playing reels, front view, and

Fig. 2 a coin-operated gambling machine according to the invention featuring playing discs, also a front view.

In the first example of an embodiment of a coin-operated gambling machine shown in Fig. 1, the front panel of the device is shown. The top right-hand corner of panel 1 on the front of the device housing 2 features a coin-insertion slot 3 by means of which coins in the denominations indicated on the device may be inserted. As soon as the amount required to play a game is present, the playing reels 4,5,6 are made to rotate around horizontal axes that are not shown. The only section of the playing reels that is visible is that which appears inside marked-out fields 7,8,9. Below each playing reel 4,5,6 a button 10,11,12 is provided by means of which the player may influence the running of the playing reel in accordance with the indicated functions "Start" or "Stop". Below the buttons 10 to 12, several fields 13 are provided in which the schedule of winning combinations (not shown) is displayed. Above the playing reels 4 to 6, two further marked-out fields 14, 15 are provided, with the field on the left displaying the number of bonus games and the field on the right displaying the amount present in the coin storage unit. In the present example of an embodiment, there are therefore 54 bonus games still possible, and the coin storage unit currently holds DM 64.70.

The panel 1 also comprises a registration means 16, which in the example of an embodiment shown here is in the form of a time switch featuring 5-minute divisions and which is located in the area of the buttons 10 to 12. As soon as the device is activated as a result of coins being inserted by a player, the registration means 16 is switched on. After a predetermined duration of play of, for example, 30 minutes, the player is credited with a predetermined number of bonus games, and this is displayed in field 14. The division on the clock face of the registration means 16 in the form of a clock may be

designed in such a way that it shows the player either the duration of play or the period of time remaining until the additional bonus games are reached. In the example of an embodiment according to Fig. 1, the combination of symbols consists of a total of six markings, of which three numbers are located on reel 4, two symbols are on reel 5, and a further number is on reel 6. It goes without saying that the combination of symbols can be freely chosen at the time of the design of the device.

In the example of an embodiment shown in Fig. 2, instead of the playing reels 4,5,6, three rotating playing discs 4', 5', 6' are provided whose rotational axes are aligned horizontally and are perpendicular to the front panel 1. The front panel 1 features up to five fields 17 to 21 each of which displays a number or a symbol when the playing reels [sic] 4' to 6' come to rest. The combinations of symbols representing winning combinations are shown in the chart provided in field 13. Below the playing reels 4' to 6', fields 14, 15 are provided for the display of the bonus games and of the amount held in the coin storage unit. Below the playing reels the registration means 16 in the form of a time switch is once again provided. In terms of function and design, the registration means 16 is equivalent to that according to Fig. 1. In the embodiment according to Fig. 2, an additional coin-insertion slot 3' is also provided. All other information contained on the front panel 1 of these two devices is not described or shown, as it does not contribute anything to the explanation of the invention.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the registration means 16 may be used independently of the type of playing reels or playing discs and of the symbols featured on them.